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LIFE OF HENRY CLAY.

BY JUNIUS.

Author of "THE CRISIS OF THE COUNTRY," and other Tracts of 1840.

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## LIFE OF HENRY CLAY.

Mr. CLAY was born the 12th of April, 1777, in Hanover county, Virginia. His father was a Baptist minister, who left his wife a widow in indigence, when Henry was in his fifth year, with seven young children, and two younger than Henry. Mr. Robert Hughes, a playfellow of Henry Clay in boyhood, said of his old friend, at a dinner on the Fourth of July, 1843, at Campbell Court House, Virginia: "He and I were born close to the slashes of old Hanover. He worked barefooted, and so did I. He went to mill, and so did I. He was good to his mamma, and so was I. I know him like a book, and love him like a brother." The boy that works barefooted for his mother, will be very likely, when he comes to be a man, if Providence opens the way, to serve his country well. The two spheres are kindred to each other.

Mr. Clay's first rudiments of education were acquired in a log schoolhouse. In the meantime, he had to work barefooted and go to mill. He is familiarly called in "old Hanover" the "MILL-BOY OF THE SLASHES,"—having been so often seen between his mother's house and Mrs. Darricott's grist-mill on the Pamunkey, mounted on a bag and a poney, guided by a rope-bridle. At the age of fourteen, he went to serve as clerk with Mr. Richard Denny, druggist, in Richmond, Va.; and the next year, 1792, went into the office of Peter Tinsley, Esq., clerk of the High Court of Chancery, where he attracted the notice, and received the kind regards of the venerable Chancellor Wythe, who afterward employed him as his amanuensis in recording his decisions, comments, &c. In these not unfavorable positions, spurred on by his ambition, and cherished by the Chancellor and others who had the sagacity to recognise the germe of his future eminence, he made rapid advances in legal and other studies. After spending his nineteenth year in the office of Robert Brooke, Esq., Attorney General for the State of Virginia, Mr. Clay obtained license for the practice of law from the Judges of the Court of Appeals in his native State.

### *Removal to Kentucky.*

In 1792 Mr. Clay's mother had married Mr. Henry Watkins, and removed with her family to Woodford county, Kentucky. Attracted by his filial regard, Henry was induced to follow her; and in 1797 Mr. Clay, a youth of twenty, opened an attorney's office in Lexington, as he says in his speech of June 6, 1842, at that place, "without patrons, without the favor or countenance of the great or opulent, and without the means of paying my weekly board. I remember how comfortable I thought I should be, if I could make *one hundred pounds*, Virginia money, a year, and with what delight I received the first *fifteen-shilling fee*. My hopes were more than realized. I immediately rushed into a lucrative practice."

### *A pleasant story.*

While Mr. Clay was yet a stranger at Lexington, he joined a debating club, but for some time declined taking any part in the discussions. After a while, however, it happened that a question was about to be put by the chairman for decision, when Mr. Clay, in a low voice, said to a fellow-member by his side, that he thought the question was not exhausted. Whereupon, glad of the chance, and without leave, Mr. Clay's friend suddenly rose, and said, "Mr. Chairman, Mr. Clay will speak on this question." Thus unexpectedly forced up, and abashed with that diffidence which gifted minds usually feel before they are used to collision with other minds, Mr. Clay began: "Gentlemen of the Jury," and perceiving his mistake, he stopped short. But through the politeness of the chairman and the club, who had wished to see him come out, he was encouraged to begin again: "Gentlemen of the Jury," said Mr. Clay, and there he stopped. At last, however, he got over the distressing balk, and gradually acquiring self-possession, he made an argument that excited the astonishment and admiration of all. The ice being thus broken, he walked straight into a reputation, that has never flagged, and never been stained.

### *The self-made man.*

"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." The first certainly was not the lot of Henry Clay, nor was greatness thrust upon him. All the distinction he has acquired, was *achieved*—achieved by his single arm, by his own lofty aims. Such is the self-made man. He will ever be honored, who, by his own inherent vigor and high aspirations, has successfully contended against obstacles that would dispirit ordinary minds, and baffled in an honorable career the adverse winds and storms of unhopeful birth and fortune. In the blood and on the graves of our fathers, martyrs to freedom, was laid a platform for such endeavors, on which our youth, whatever their origin, may build high hopes, and earn an imperishable fame. The spectacle of the boy working "barefooted" for his mother, touches all hearts; and when that boy, in riper years, is seen toiling through a like career for his country, the mother of us all, he obeys the instincts, and fulfils the high destiny of his filial piety.

*Mr. Clay at the bar.*

It might be difficult to say, whether Mr. Clay was more able in the management of criminal or civil causes ; but it is easy to decide in which he early acquired the highest reputation. His characteristic sympathy for the unfortunate, especially for persons in peril of life, awoke the profoundest feelings of his nature, and he never failed of success in his defence of persons accused of capital crime, though he had cases in hand which seemed to all others hopeless, as for example, those of Mrs. Phelps, of the two Germans, father and son, and of Willis, all clearly cases of murder in an aggravated degree, but all successfully defended by this young advocate. The only capital case in which he appeared for plaintiffs, was against a slave, who had killed his master while undertaking to chastise him, which resulted in the slave's condemnation. With this exception, Mr. Clay has always been the defender of slaves, and often, never without success, volunteered his services in suits for their freedom, and in other cases. It has ever been a scrupulous rule with Mr. Clay, that no man, freeman or slave, should go without defence in law for want of money, when it was in his power to aid them.

Nor was Mr. Clay less successful in civil cases. Down to this time, he has been regarded as second to no counsellor in the Union. In one case, involving the land laws of Virginia and Kentucky, while yet a young man, he had, in a necessary absence, left it in the hands of an associate counsel, who was foiled by his opponents at all points, during a two-days contest ; but just as the case was being submitted to the Court, who would doubtless have decided against him, Mr. Clay came in, had a moment's conversation with his colleague, addressed the Court for half an hour, in total ignorance of the evidence that had been adduced, *and gained the cause!*

*Mr. Clay and emancipation.*

When Mr. Clay arrived in Kentucky, he found the people of the State agitating the question of remodelling the Constitution, and a very respectable minority were in favor of introducing a clause for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, as had been done in some of the northern States, by freeing at a specific age those born after the adoption of the proposed Constitution, that ultimately all should be free. Mr. Clay enlisted in this project of emancipation with great zeal, and devoted all his energies, through the press, by personal influence, and in an active campaign, to accomplish this end. But he and his associates were unsuccessful. More than twenty years afterwards, when he proposed the compromise to settle the Missouri question, he declared, on the floor of Congress, that, if he were a citizen of Missouri, he would use all his influence to establish a system of gradual and ultimate emancipation, and he earnestly recommended it. In a speech at the anniversary of the American Colonization Society, in 1827, Mr. Clay said of slavery, "If I could only be instrumental in eradicating this deepest stain upon the character of our country, I would not exchange the proud satisfaction I should enjoy, for the honor of all the triumphs ever decreed to the most successful conqueror."

*The alien and sedition laws.*

These two laws were passed at the Session of 1798-'9. The first gave power to the President to banish an alien at his discretion, if he judged his presence here prejudicial to the interests of the country ; and the second put a stopper on freedom of speech and of the press, in discussing the merits of public men. The second was certainly against the Constitution, and the first was no less a bold stride towards monarchical power. Kentucky was the first of the States that shook the dewdrops from her mane, and Henry Clay was the organ of her indignation. Then only twenty-two years of age, the thunders of his eloquence electrified the people. No other man was so prominent in the field, and none so effective in that influence, which raised Mr. Jefferson to power, as this young champion of democracy. A true democrat then, he is so still, and ever has been. Where can be found, in this broad land, a more vigilant sentinel of popular rights, or a more faithful denouncer of Executive usurpations, and the abuses of Executive power ?

*The saddle on the wrong horse.*

In a reply to Mr. Calhoun, while the sub-treasury was under debate, Mr. Clay said : "All the former grounds of difference which distinguished that (the Federal) party, and were the subjects of contention between them and the Republicans, have ceased, from lapse of time and change of circumstance, *except one, and that is the maintenance and increase of Executive power.* This was the leading policy of the Federal party. A strong, powerful, and energetic Executive *was its favorite tenet.* I tell the gentleman, that he will find the *true old democratic party*, who were for resisting the encroachments of power, and limiting Executive patronage, *on this side of the Senate, and not with his new allies, who do not hold a solitary principle in common with the republican party of 1798.* IT IS THE OLD FEDERAL PARTY WITH WHOM HE IS NOW ACTING."

*Mr. Clay's entrance into public life.*

In 1803 Mr. Clay was elected from Fayette county to a seat in the lower house of the Kentucky legislature, and was immediately pitted against Mr. Felix Grundy in defending the



charter of the Lexington Insurance Company against a movement for its repeal, in which he was successful by convincing the Senate, who listened to his argument in the Assembly, though he lost the vote of his own house. It was in this field that Mr. Clay's parliamentary powers were first presented to public gaze, and gave earnest of future and high promise. He was a leader there, as everywhere, and a favorite of the public. From this time to the war of 1812, we find him alternately in the legislature of his adopted State, and in the councils of the nation at Washington. In 1806 he was transferred to the Senate of the United States for one session, to fill out the unexpired term of the Hon. John Adair, resigned, where he immediately distinguished himself as one of the earliest movers—more properly, perhaps, the founder—of the internal improvement system. After having been again returned to the house of assembly in Kentucky, and made speaker, he was in 1809 sent back to the United States Senate for two years, to complete the term of the Hon. Buckner Thurston, who had resigned. It was in April, 1811, while a bill to provide munitions of war, &c., was under debate in the Senate, and during the pendency of an amendment *giving preference to articles of American growth and manufacture*, that Mr. Clay boldly and distinctly propounded and advocated his views on the *policy of protection*. The amendment prevailed. Mr. Madison found himself sustained by all the powers of Mr. Clay, in his proclamation to assert our jurisdiction to the *line of the Perdido* in Florida. Various and active were the exertions of Mr. Clay in the Senate, during this Congress; and among the rest, as is known, he was found in opposition to the recharter of the Bank of the United States.

#### *Mr. Clay and Aaron Burr.*

There was a time when the envious rivals of Mr. Clay, if such men could be his rivals, undertook to calumniate him for consenting to defend Colonel Burr on his first trial. Mr. Burr had written to Mr. Clay, and assured him, on the honor of a gentleman, that there was no foundation for the charges against him; whereupon Mr. Clay, with his characteristic generosity, undertook his defence, and succeeded; but afterward, having discovered the truth, treated him as he deserved. Even if Mr. Clay had *had* no such assurances from Col. Burr, it would be a slender compliment to our laws and institutions, which profess to guaranty an accused person a fair trial, to deny him counsel!

#### *Mr. Clay elected to the House of Representatives of the United States.*

In all the public stations, successively, which Mr. Clay occupied from 1803 to 1811, we find him always prominent; always looked up to, though a young man; always leading off on some stirring theme or in some important measure, riveting the attention and commanding the respect of the bodies of which he was a member, and rising in this western hemisphere a star of uncommon brilliancy. Having a choice of a seat in the Senate or House of Representatives of the United States, in 1811, he did not hesitate to prefer the latter, for the stirring and eventful period that was then before the country, in a prospect of war with Great Britain. On the first ballot he was made Speaker, an honor never before or since conferred on a new member.

#### *Mr. Clay and the war.*

It is known that we went into the war with Great Britain in the midst of powerfully-conflicting opinions as to the necessity, propriety, or expediency of so momentous a step; that the administration and its friends were vigorously assailed from where they had need and some claims for encouragement and support; that the first stages of the war were disastrous, and, as such, gave eminent advantage to the opposition and to the enemy. But the brilliant achievements of its later stages, and the final result, put the whole matter in a new and different light. The lapse of nearly thirty years has served only to impart additional validity to a general conviction at once entertained, that we acquired by that struggle very important benefits and needful advantages.

The part borne by Mr. Clay, in that trying period of our history, adds not less to his claims on the gratitude of his country, than to the blaze of his reputation. At one time portraying, in many terms and with flashing indignation, the injuries and insults of the foe; at another, remonstrating with domestic opponents: then turning, with a true American heart, and laying his electrifying hand on the heart of the American people, he disarmed opposition, chased away the fears of the timid, imparted fresh courage to the strong, and stood by the Government, erect, prominent, and influential in its counsels, both in the origination and conduct of the war. He was as a general-in-chief over the intellectual power of the country, and the breath of his mouth moved over it as the wind of heaven sways the forests of an unbroken wilderness. His animating spirit, his stirring eloquence, his useful counsels, and his untiring agency, from the position he occupied, were everywhere felt, and equally beneficial in our army and navy, to excite them to noble and successful deeds, as in the presiding magistracy of the nation, to give it constancy and vigor. By his timely advice, and by the magic of his persuasions, the resources of the country started up from their places of repose, organized, disciplined, and in force; and the nation was victorious. He was the guiding

genius of the conflict, which ended, not less by his instrumentality, for the honor and enduring good of the republic. See the detail of his action as Speaker and Member of the House of Representatives, and read his speeches, as an illustration and in proof of this brief sketch

*Mr. Madison's estimate of Mr. Clay.*

He invited him repeatedly into his Cabinet, and offered him the mission to Russia, then deemed very important. He even proposed to put Mr. Clay at the head of the army; and was only deterred from sending in his name to the Senate for the appointment of *General-in-Chief* by the advice that he could not be spared from the public councils.

*Mr. Clay's services in the Treaty of Ghent.*

When the offensive demands first put forward by the British Commissioners were chiefly waived, a difficulty arose in a want of harmony in our own Board, on a very important question, *to wit*, whether the right of navigation on the Mississippi should be conceded to the British? Messrs. Adams, Gallatin, and Bayard, were in favor of it, and Messrs. Clay and Russell opposed to it. The reasons for it were, first, that it was a former right: and, next, that if not granted, it was likely to disturb our fishing rights as before enjoyed. The reasons against it were, first, that when before conceded, the Mississippi was supposed to have its sources in the British dominions, in which case it is a usual right among nations; but it was since ascertained, that its sources lie within our jurisdiction. The British might as properly demand the right of navigating the Connecticut, the Hudson, the Potomac, or any or all of our rivers. Secondly, the instructions of our commissioners forbade treating on the navigation of rivers whose sources are in our bounds. Thirdly, in the then present and prospective condition of the great west, and in our relations with Indian tribes, the admission of the British into those waters must, necessarily, be prolific of incalculable evils, of endless controversy, and would endanger the peace of the two countries. Mr. Clay, therefore, being in the minority, felt himself constrained to say, *that he would put his signature to no treaty conceding the proposed right.* This brought Mr. Bayard over to his side, and the treaty was concluded without prejudice to our fishing interests. Who can tell what the country owes to Mr. Clay for his foresight and firmness on this occasion?

The respect and esteem he acquired with the British commissioners, the honors paid him at Paris and London after the conclusion of the treaty, and his reception at home, are a sufficient attestation of the high consideration he had won both in this country and abroad.

*Mr. Clay's imputed change of opinion on the subject of a national bank.*

After Mr. Clay's return from abroad, he was again sent to Congress, and again made Speaker of the House of Representatives. It was this Congress (the fourteenth) which rechartered the Bank of the United States, and Mr. Clay gave it his support. The change, however, was rather in the commercial and monetary condition of the country, making more evident what was "necessary and proper for carrying into execution the powers of Congress," specified in the Constitution, in regard to the currency, than in Mr. Clay. His opposition to a national bank in 1811 was based on the belief he then entertained, that it was not "necessary" in the sense of the Constitution, and therefore not "proper," and that the State banks were sufficient. But the sad experience of four years, without a national bank, had demonstrated to Mr. Clay's mind, and to all the world, that the State banks were *insufficient*, and that a national bank was "necessary," which brought such a measure within the constitutional powers of the General Government. *This was the change.* Mr. Clay's former opinion was founded on *one* set of facts, the latter on *another*; and though there is a *difference*, there is no *inconsistency*.

*Anecdotes.*

For having voted for Mr. Richard M. Johnson's "*Compensation Bill*," in 1816, an unpopular measure, and repealed at the next Congress, Mr. Clay had to make his defence to his constituents. Meeting an old hunter one day, who was against him on that account, Mr. Clay asked him: "Have you a good rifle, my friend?" "Yes." "Does it ever *flash*?" "It did *once*." "And did you throw it away?" "No: I picked the flint, tried it again, and brought down the game." "Have I ever *flashed*, except on the Compensation Bill?" "No!" "And will you throw me away?" "No! no!" cried the hunter, with tears in his eyes, and grasping Mr. Clay's hand,—"*No! no! I will pick the flint, and try you again.*"

A barber in Lexington was also in the same state of feeling toward Mr. Clay, and about to vote against him. But meeting Mr. Clay one day in the street, he accosted him, and said, "I have wronged you, Mr. Clay." "How so?" "Why, my wife came to me, and said, 'Jerry, don't you remember when you were in jail, and Mr. Clay came and let you out? and will you vote against him?' 'No! no! Jinny,' I said, 'do you think I am such a beast?'"

*Mr. Clay's efforts in Congress for the recognition of the independence of the South American States.*

The name of Henry Clay, of North America, is better known, and excites more gratitude, in the republics and States of South America, than that of any other man, living or dead.



foreign to that quarter of the globe; and he is known there only as the early, disinterested, heroic advocate of their emancipation. If they have not yet done as well as we could have wished, it detracts not at all from the virtue which so magnanimously espoused their cause, and finally won for them such important advantages. In 1816 Mr. Clay begun to plead for them in the American Congress; in 1818 he made a speech in those halls, which was read at the head of the armies of South America, while fighting for freedom, and electrified their hearts; and in 1822, after six years of struggle against opposition, he had the satisfaction of witnessing the consummation of his aims, in the recognition of their independence by our Government. In 1827 he had a letter of thanks from Bolivar, to which he replied, with his characteristic frankness, expressing his regrets that Bolivar had disappointed the hopes of mankind, and commending to him the example of the immortal Washington.

#### *Mr. Clay on Internal Improvement.*

On the Cumberland road is erected a monument, surmounted by the Genius of Liberty, and inscribed with the name of HENRY CLAY, in recognition and testimony of the fact, that this great national work, which has levelled the Alleghanies, and created a powerful bond for the perpetuity of the Union, owes its existence to him, as a part of that great and beneficent "American System," so called, of which he is the acknowledged father. Internal improvement, as a national policy, though sanctioned, as is believed, by the Constitution, and without doubt sanctioned by the opinion and wishes of the country, when freely and fairly expressed, has balked sadly all along by means of Executive scruples and one-man power. For a length of years Mr. Clay battled heroically for this sublime enterprise, and has stamped upon the public mind an impression not easily to be eradicated. He has sown seed in the field, which, under more genial suns, will yield their fruit. The question lies only for a while upon the shelf, where unworthy hands have put it, and will doubtless come down again to fructify the Union with its blessings. Nay, it is not on the shelf. The influence of the originator and stimulator of this magnificent scheme, has been felt by the States, and prompted the members of the great family, in their separate capacity, to assume the more appropriate functions of the unnatural parent, and, in no small extent, to make amends for her defect of duty. It *must* be done, and *will* be done. Then will the Union be bound by ties which nothing can break, and the great arteries of this life-giving influence will conduct the vital current to every part.

#### *Mr. Clay and American labor.*

It has been the lot, the good fortune, the peculiar talent, the high gift, we may say the *genius* of Henry Clay, not only in being endowed with sagacity to pry into the present, but with prophecy to look into the future. A wise system of national policy, in all its parts, would seem to have sprung forth in full maturity from *his* mind, before the seed had broken its shell in the general mind. Hence the tardiness with which the nation has been inducted into his views, and the facility with which they have been temporarily blinded. Winds and storms and the convulsions of nature may disturb the action of the tides; but these mighty movements of nature do not follow the sun and the moon more surely, than the public mind of this country moves forward in the path of its inspired and guiding genius. Mr. Clay has never propounded a great thought or a great measure, or made a public argument, which has not sunk into the mind of the American people, and gone to the bottom, where it is securely anchored. He has only to stand still, and the nation will come to him. It is coming *now*, has *long* been coming, it *has* come.

Take that part of his "American system," which throws its shield over American labor, industry, and enterprise, ~~which~~ was conceived by Mr. Clay when he first came into public life, and which has been toiled for by him from that day to this, and there is not a single article of it which the public mind of the country is not at this moment prepared to adopt. (See our Tract on the Tariff.) It is at last found out, that American labor, industry, enterprise, products, and interests, *must be protected*—that protection is not only necessary, but proper in the nature of things, and in the laws of human society; and that nothing is more preposterous, or more suicidal, than to put and leave ourselves in the power of foreign factors and foreign Governments, as, to a great extent, we have done heretofore.

What American labor—(we use this term in all its applications to manufactures, the mechanic arts, agriculture, and commerce, more especially the first two)—what American labor owes to Mr. Clay, is too well known to need repetition. It has been badly enough protected, at best. But all it has had of fair reward, all the manufactories that have sprung up in the country on which labor so extensively depends, the entire system indeed, are chiefly to be ascribed to the conceptions, zeal, and efforts of Henry Clay. Not to speak of the decided stand he took at an early period in his adopted State, or of his efforts of the same character in Congress, in 1816, when the proper effectiveness of the tariff of that year failed only by the loss of Mr. Clay's amendment, which he urged with so much eloquence and zeal, in 1820, when the specie was flowing out of the country like rivers into the sea, for want of



an adequate tariff, a new and great effort was made, with Mr. Clay at its head, which failed, notwithstanding all the agony of his patriotic endeavors. Foreseeing the fate of the measure, while under debate, Mr. Clay said:—"I frankly own, that I feel *great* solicitude for the success of this bill." And in his deep and thrilling tone, he added:—"But I will not despair. The cause, I verily believe, is the cause of the country. It may be postponed; it may be frustrated for the moment; but it finally *must* prevail." In 1824, it *did* prevail, and Mr. Justice Baldwin, of the Supreme Court, said of Mr. Clay on that occasion, that "he was General, corporal, and private," so multiform were his functions, so assiduous his efforts. It has been said, and facts attest its truth, that the seven years subsequent to the tariff of 1824, were the most prosperous in the history of the country. The tariff of 1828 was in some respects unequal and unfair, in consequence of an attempt of Martin Van Buren and Silas Wright to break down the system, by over-straining certain parts of it, in which, for the time, they failed.

#### *The Compromise Act.*

Mr. Clay has been blamed for this. And why? But for that, Mr. Verplanck's bill, reducing duties to a common level of 15 per cent., known to be an Administration measure, would have passed, and the whole system of manufactures, and all the capital vested in them, would have perished. In addition to this, nullification threatened to deluge the land in the blood of a civil war. Mr. Clay's object, therefore, in the Compromise, was, *first*, to appease nullification; *next*, to save the system of manufactures; and *last*, to give the nation, and all parties, time for reflection. He knew that nullification would cool down, that the policy of Mr. Verplanck's bill, at that moment in danger of being forced upon the country, would not bear sober reflection, and that it was competent for Congress at any time to reconsider its previous acts, and repeal or modify them. The Compromise Act, therefore, was a remedial, healing measure for an alarming crisis, and as such necessary and most beneficent. One thing more can be said of it: it was contingently a perfect scheme, and if the currency of the country had not been broken down, it would have sustained the manufacturing interests, and answered all the purposes of the country, till the time contemplated by its terms had arrived for revising and readjusting the tariff regulations. But, so long as the country was in the hands of the Destructive Dynasty, properly so called, the contingent prospects of the Compromise Act were of course unfavorable for an ultimate salutary result. Nothing could save the country in such hands.

#### *The tariff of 1842.*

For want of space, we beg leave to refer to our Tracts on the Currency and the Tariff, for what we should otherwise say here. As Mr. Clay was not in Congress at the passage of the Tariff of 1842, and has had little to say on public affairs since his retirement, his views of this measure can only be inferred from his known and published opinions. There may be details in it which he would wish to modify; but it was framed by those who thought it profitable, and no less an honor, to be instructed by him, and who desired to carry out his policy. Its salutary effect in reviving business and trade, and in restoring the prosperity of the country, is all the praise that need be bestowed upon it. We refer to our first Tract, *THE TEST*, for proofs of the other and important benefits to the country, in the way of retrenchment and reform, effected by the 27th (Whig) Congress, notwithstanding the foul treason against which they had to contend, and which defeated their general policy. The Tariff alone is a compensation for the struggle and revolution of 1840, though the country has been most perfidiously robbed of its just rights in the failure of other important measures. Doubtless, the people will avenge themselves in 1844.

#### *The history of Mr. Clay's policy and efforts in regard to protection.*

We do not propose to give this history, for we have no room, but only to say, it is one and the same from beginning to end. A true disciple of Jefferson in this particular, he moved while a member of the Kentucky legislature, that each member should clothe himself, from head to foot, in domestic fabrics; and if we take this fact as the germe and index of his policy, through life, we shall not greatly err. Mr. Clay was never an ultra, or a bigot; but he knew what the interests of the country required, and was willing to set an impressive example—not that he would exclude imports, injure the foreign trade of the country, and thereby impair the revenue; but he wished to see the country truly *independent*. "Our complete independence," he said in 1820, "will only be consummated after the policy of this bill shall be recognised and adopted." This bill, as we have seen, was lost.

#### *A retrospect and prospect.*

Hard, painful, perilous, and changeful, has been the conflict in this country against the Destructive Dynasty; but *something* has been gained. We have a system of manufactures, though *imperfect*, and a host of thriving mechanics and artisans, and they have done enough to show what *can* be done. The foundation is laid, though the edifice is incomplete. No power, we trust, can upset this beginning, since the people have discovered its importance, and feel it

more and more every day. On the Cumberland Road stands a monument, announcing to the world and future generations, who battled successfully for Internal Improvement. Not one monument alone, but tens, hundreds will be raised throughout the land, to tell the world and posterity, who was the father of the "American System"—who the successful Defender of the rights of American labor.

*The Missouri question.*

All know, that this was a stern trial of the republic. We propose to notice it only so far as it is connected with Mr. Clay, whose efforts and influence hushed the tempest, and carried the country safely through it. In consequence of professional occupation at home, Mr. Clay had resigned the Speaker's Chair by a letter at the opening of the Session of 1820-'21, and did not arrive at Washington till the 16th of January, when he found Congress in a blaze of excitement on the Missouri question. All eyes were turned to him. After sounding the state of feeling, he moved, on the 2d of February, and carried the appointment of a Committee of thirteen, upon this subject, and was himself made Chairman. On the 10th, he reported a Compromise, which was rejected by a small majority of the House, after repeated trials. He then moved for a joint Committee of both Houses, which was carried, and acceded to by the Senate, the result of which was a report in effect the same as that before made to the House, which was ratified by both branches, without farther controversy, and the question was settled, on condition of its being accepted by the State of Missouri, as was afterward done.

In this adjustment, if we mistake not, the principle was recognised, that in States, where slavery has existed since the organization of our Government, the question of its abolition or continuance, shall be left where the Federal Constitution has left it, viz. in the sovereignty of those States, and that this rule applied to Missouri, as having been received into the Union as a part of Louisiana. The compromise acceded to by Missouri, was, first, the suppression of an obnoxious provision in her Constitution, designed to exclude from her jurisdiction free colored people of other States; and next, an admission to the freedom of the Union, in her limits, of all persons recognised as citizens of other States, it being understood, that free colored people are so recognised in some of the States.

Mr. Clay's views and feelings, as an emancipationist of the old school, what he said on the floor of Congress, and his advice to the State of Missouri, on this occasion, have been noticed in another place.

*"The Great Pacificator."*

In Kentucky Mr. Clay had early acquired the name of "*the Great Commoner*," the people's man. Protracted, and almost hopeless as this Missouri controversy had become, agitating the whole nation from the outmost verge to the centre, and threatening to rend in pieces the fair frame of this republic, Mr. Clay had scarcely been at the seat of Government over a month, before it was settled, and settled for ever. With unanimous voice, and simultaneously, the whole country hailed him as "*THE GREAT PACIFICATOR*." Twice, on like emergencies, when all hope of conciliation appeared to be abandoned, has he stepped in, and rescued the nation from an impending civil war. The attitude of South Carolina, in 1833, with the torch of nullification in her hand, was even more formidable than this firebrand of the West. For one such achievement, by words of peace and kindness, a loftier, though less noisy fame is earned, than by vanquishing the foes of the country in the battle plain. "Blessed are the peacemakers." He who, dispensing with brute force, marches straight into the hearts of men, to conquer them there, is a hero of the highest order. The Duke of Wellington has confessed, that the courage of the field is *physical*. This is moral and sublime. It demonstrates a tact in swaying men's minds for purposes of good, rarely possessed.

*Mr. Clay in the Speaker's Chair.*

Two or three days after Mr. Clay's elevation to the Speaker's Chair, for the fourth time, in 1823, the following lines appeared in the National Intelligencer:—

"As near the Potomac's broad stream, t'other day,  
Fair LIBERTY strolled, in solicitous mood,  
Deep pondering the future—unheeding her way—  
She met goddess NATURE beside a green wood.  
'Good mother,' she cried, 'deign to help me at need!  
I must make for my guardians a Speaker to-day;  
The first in the world I would give them.'—'Indeed!  
When I made the first Speaker, I made him of CLAY!'"

The legislature of Kentucky, and the House of Representatives in Congress, seem always to have had this good advice before their eyes, while "*THE FIRST IN THE WORLD*" was among them. The captivating amenity, the commanding dignity, the exemplary impartiality, and the useful energy, with which Mr. Clay discharged the laborious and responsible duties of this station for so many years—twelve in Congress—are attested by all parties.



*Mr. Clay's indifference to the allurements of place.*

As under Mr. Madison, so also under Mr. Monroe, he was repeatedly called to the Cabinet, and offered a *carte blanche* for any one of the foreign missions. But he declined them all. It can not be denied, that the post he occupied in Congress, was vastly more important, and more influential, and no one can fail to commend his choice. Mr. Clay had his whole mind and heart bent on the great questions of the time, and it is no more than fair to allow, that he wanted to be where he could do most good to the country. In that place, he was near the people, was the people's man, and the whole country's man. With the mighty interests at stake in the war, with the questions of internal improvement and the Tariff pending, &c., &c., how could a man of his known temper and patriotism, be content with any post, however exalted or honorable, but that of *legislation*? He preferred usefulness to place.

*Reception of Gen. La Fayette.*

The re-visit of this early friend and self-sacrificing champion of the American people, who came from the old world to fight for and with them in the new, in a time that tried men's souls, was most grateful to the people of this country, and his reception in the Capitol of the Republic, the 10th of December, 1824, after an absence of nearly half a century, was one of peculiar and thrilling interest. It fell to the lot of Mr. Clay, as Speaker of the House of Representatives, to tender to this distinguished guest the unfeigned welcome of the nation, and to do the honors of the occasion. We need not say, that it was done as it should be. The feeling was intense, and the scene sublime. We are indebted to an allusion of the speaker on the occasion for the inimitable and just illustration, that it was not unlike the reunion of pure spirits in an after state of existence, to recount the worthy deeds of the former, in which they had mutual sufferings, toils, perils, triumphs—and in the end a glorious triumph.

*Mr. Clay and General Jackson.*

We are advised by Mr. Clay himself, in a speech in Senate, of 1838, that his first acquaintance with General Jackson, was in the fall of 1815 or 1816, and mutually agreeable. In 1819, Mr. Clay thought it his duty, in debate, to animadvert with freedom, and in terms of censure, on some parts of General Jackson's conduct in the Seminole campaign, relating to the execution of Ambrister and Arbuthnot, his hostile irruption into Florida in violation of instructions from the War Department, and his forcible seizure of the fortress of Pensacola, while in possession of a Spanish garrison. This was of course displeasing, and interrupted their friendship. At an early part of the session of Congress for 1824-5, they met at a dinner got up by the mutual friends of both, and General Jackson took Mr. Clay home in his carriage, after which they repeatedly met at dinner, till the election of Mr. Adams by the House of Representatives, which was the end of their social intercourse.

*Mr. Clay a candidate for the Presidency in 1824—the result.*

The votes of the Electoral Colleges stood thus:—For Andrew Jackson, 99; for John Quincy Adams, 84; for Wm. H. Crawford, 41; for Henry Clay, 37. Of course, by a rule of the Constitution, the three candidates having the largest number of votes, went into the House of Representatives, in Congress, for a choice, which resulted in the election of Mr. Adams.

Mr. Clay, who had a majority of the Legislature of Louisiana in his favor, was entitled to the Electoral vote of that State, and would have been carried over Mr. Crawford into the House, if the choice of Electors by that body had not been made in the absence of two or three of his friends. There was also a disgraceful intrigue in the control of the Electoral votes of New York, the detail of which is in evidence and fully substantiated, which violated an understanding among the friends of the respective candidates, and robbed Mr. Clay of a sufficient number of votes to have carried him into the House. So that, by unfair dealing, Mr. Clay failed of being returned to the House, from two independent sources, either of which, conducted in good faith, would have made him President of the United States in 1825; for it is admitted, that he would have been elected, if he had gone into the House of Representatives. The consequences to the country, made contingent on that event, have been truly momentous!

*Plurality—majority.*

Every one knows, that the 162 Electoral votes given for Messrs. Adams, Crawford, and Clay, were for either of these men, in preference to General Jackson, and consequently, that the majority over General Jackson's 99 votes, and *against* him, was 63. And yet, it was most *un-democratically* maintained at the time and afterward, that because General Jackson had a *plurality* of votes, he was entitled to be made President against the will of the *majority*!

*The alleged bargain.*

A most wicked and infamous attempt was made, while the election of President was pending in the House of Representatives, to force Mr. Clay into the support of General Jackson,



or to bar his freedom of action, by publishing a story, that Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay had made a *bargain*, in which Mr. Clay was to support Mr. Adams for the Presidency, and Mr. Adams was to make Mr. Clay Secretary of State. The absurdity of this calumny must instantly strike any one, who regards either of the following considerations:—1. That no office would be refused to Mr. Clay, whichever of the candidates might be President, whether we consider his merits, or the fact, that neither could be elected without his aid. 2. That Mr. Clay's rejection of all offices under Mr. Madison and Mr. Monroe, was sufficient evidence, that he did not covet such honors, and would not take them, except to serve the country. 3. That Mr. Clay's known views of General Jackson's character and principles,—without disparaging his merits as a soldier—would of necessity oblige him to lend his influence in another direction. 4. That, having ascertained by a personal visit, that Mr. Crawford's state of health forbade all hope of fitness for the office of Chief Magistrate, Mr. Clay had no choice. And 5. That Mr. Clay had repeatedly, by letter and conversation, before the meeting of Congress and afterward, declared his purpose to support Mr. Adams. Was Mr. Clay a man to bargain for place—to solicit?

#### *The investigation.*

As was due to himself, Mr. Clay demanded of the House a Committee of investigation, and Mr. George Kremer, a member from Pennsylvania, was compelled to father the deed. But this precious morsel was too important to those who had got it up, and who were feeding the nation with it, to allow it so suddenly to be snatched from them, and Mr. Kremer is instructed to back out from the Committee, under the extraordinary pretext, that he did not choose to be forced into such a court, either as accuser or witness! A libeller, and not bound to prove it!

#### *The after plot.*

It was foreseen, that nothing was more probable, than that Mr. Clay should go for Mr. Adams, and nothing more probable than that Mr. Adams should desire Mr. Clay to be Secretary of State. "Well then," said these conspirators, "we have nothing to do but to promulgate it as a bargain to defeat General Jackson; and if it turns out so, as doubtless it will, we shall have him on that tack; or if, after such an assault, he has not courage enough to act the free man, we shall have gained our end by the shortest cut."

With that indignant scorn, with which conscious rectitude looks in the face of mean artifice and low cunning, Mr. Clay supported Mr. Adams, as he had declared he should, and then went into the State Department. All the world would have justified him, if he had done the latter for no other reason, than to vindicate his rights against a foul conspiracy.

But a little more than two years afterward, a letter, dated March 8, 1827, written, though not signed, by Carter Beverly, of Virginia, appeared in the newspapers, stating, on the authority of General Jackson, that Mr. Clay's friends in Congress had made proposals to General Jackson, to support him in the House of Representatives for President, if he (Gen. Jackson) would not continue Mr. Adams Secretary of State; in other words, *as understood*, if he would make Mr. Clay Secretary, which he (General Jackson) had indignantly rejected.

It was not till the 5th of June (time enough to hatch up the mode of future proceeding, and time enough to give this infamous calumny full scope of action on the public mind) that General Jackson could be induced, although solicited by Mr. Beverly, to confirm his (Mr. Beverly's) letter; and then he shifted the responsibility on "a distinguished member of Congress," the Hon. James Buchanan, as afterward appeared. But Mr. Buchanan, having some honesty in his heart, was forced to throw back all the responsibility on his master, entirely acquitting Mr. Clay and his friends, and got out of the scrape as well as he could. Mr. Beverly, foreseeing that he must die, and being troubled in his conscience on account of that letter, has since, in another document, made a public recantation, so that this deep-laid, foul conspiracy is now fully exposed. That the parties in it should first originate such calumnies, and then allow them to float so long, even for years, over the broad surface of the community, poisoning the public mind against a man, whose pure and disinterested patriotism, and whose unsullied honor, none knew better than the calumniators themselves, can only be accounted for by the fact, that such deep depravity was necessary to their ends.

#### *The truth of the case.*

The truth is, that the advances made in this case, were from the other side, and from Gen. Jackson himself, towards Mr. Clay, we mean not in unworthy proposals, but with a manifest anxiety to obtain Mr. Clay's support. Mr. Clay retired early from the dinner, of which we have spoken elsewhere, and was about to step into his own carriage, which was waiting at the door, when he was followed by General Jackson and Major Eaton, and pressed to take a seat with them, with which, by common civility, he was forced to comply. And this politeness was continued till the election in the House took place; and the worst of it all is, that it was continued while the plot against Mr. Clay was hatching, and a part of it (Mr. Kremer's) actually opening on the public.

*The re-action.*

It is the wise economy of Providence, that great offences shall have a great atonement, and that innocence under a cloud, shall come out under the blaze of noon. It was a cloud, indeed, and a dark one, which the enemies of Mr. Clay brought over his head; and although it has been slow in departing, the day will be so much brighter and longer. Shielded by uprightness, Mr. Clay has always been too lofty-minded to battle with calumny, or even to avail himself of disproof or confession, except as urged by duty to his friends and the public; and when reminded by a voice from the crowd, during his speech at Lexington, June 6, 1842, of Mr. Beverly's recantation, he replied—"I want no testimony,"—and laying his hand upon his heart, said—"here—HERE—HERE is the best witness of my innocence." Mr. Clay may be wrong in this, and ought, doubtless, to consent to a full exposure of the base slanders, by which he was once so fiercely assailed. The hearts of the people of this country have long been returning, and are still returning to him, so far as they have been alienated, like the ocean tide that rolls up on the bosom of the shore, with this difference:—there will be no ebbing of the waters.

*Mr. Clay and Mr. Randolph.*

All are acquainted with the eccentricities of John Randolph, and with the facts, that he had no great liking for Mr. Clay, and that he was wont to rebel against Mr. Clay's discipline, as Speaker of the House of Representatives. It is, however, recorded, to his credit, that in 1833, while passing through Washington to Philadelphia, where he died soon after, — he requested to be carried up to the Senate Chamber, although too weak to walk, or stand. He had not been there long, before Mr. Clay rose to speak in debate. "Help me up, help me up," said Mr. Randolph to a friend that stood by him—"I came here to hear that voice." When Mr. Clay had finished, he came and spoke with Mr. Randolph. They shook hands, and parted in a spirit of mutual good will. It was the last time they ever met.

*Mr. Adams' Administration—Mr. Clay as Secretary of State.*

The grounds of opposition to Mr. Adams' Administration, or rather the reasons alleged, which occasioned his defeat in 1828, have long since been exploded, though too late to save the country from a long and sad history of misfortune. The reasons were generally about as valid, as the calumnies against Mr. Clay. Never in our history have we had a better or more patriotic Administration, and never was the country equally prosperous. History will do it justice, and even the people are already inclined to do so. They now behold in Mr. Adams an American patriarch of transcendent virtue, and transcendent powers, rising in reputation and glory, as he descends to the place of his fathers. Like the trees of a tropical climate, he has blossomed and borne fruit twice, before his summer has ended.

The Administration of the State Department by Mr. Clay, was alike honorable to himself, and beneficial to the country. The Panama Mission was under his guidance, in which he was peculiarly at home as the advocate of the South American States; his attempt to gain the favorable interposition of Russia in behalf of those States, reflects not less honor on his heart, than his head; and more treaties were negotiated by him, than by all his predecessors from the foundation of the Government. The reputation of Mr. Clay in foreign parts, gave him eminent facilities in the management of our foreign affairs, and they were used with a true American spirit, as just as patriotic. It was a time of general peace, and therefore no great and stirring questions were then in agitation. "Who," said Mr. Adams, after his retirement, "could select a man, whom, for his pre-eminent talents, for his splendid services, for his ardent patriotism, for his all-embracing public spirit, for his fervid eloquence in behalf of the rights and liberties of mankind, and for his long experience in the affairs of the Union, foreign and domestic, a President of the United States, intent only on the honor and welfare of his country, ought to have preferred to HENRY CLAY?"

*Good humor.*

On Mr. Clay's return to Kentucky, after the inauguration of General Jackson, in the spring of 1829, he found the roads extremely bad, and to avoid the thumps and knocks of the inside of the stage, he turned his back upon his fellow passengers, and took a seat with the driver on the box, when they were a few miles east of Uniontown, Pa. The citizens of that place, being on the look out for the arrival of the Ex-Secretary of State, stood in crowds to welcome him, as the stage drove up. "Gentlemen," said Mr. Clay, before he got down, "you see I am among the OUTS, but I can assure you, that the INS behind me have a far worse time of it."

Mr. Clay's good humor never forsakes him. It seems impossible for him to resist temptations for repartee, in which he is most skilful, or for original pleasantries of which he is most prolific, or for sallies of wit in which he is most happy. His buoyant, lofty, and ever-active mind, seems to be relieved by such playfulness. Or is this the mode by which superior and more vigorous intellects can more easily come down to a common level, and commune with



ordinary minds? We observe, that this propensity is usually allied to benevolence. Certainly, whether so or not, its effect is to relieve the tedium of the dull facts of life, and to promote the happiness of social intercourse.

*Three thousand at one table.*

On the 16th of May, 1829, after Mr. Clay's retirement, he sat down to a public dinner, in Fowler's garden, Lexington, given in honor of him, with *three thousand* of his "old friends and neighbors"! It was then he said:—"When I felt as if I should sink beneath the storm of abuse and detraction, which was violently raging around me, I felt myself upheld and sustained by your encouraging voice and your approving smiles. I have doubtless committed many faults and indiscretions, over which you have thrown the broad mantle of your charity." Such communion with "old friends and neighbors" is not bought by kings; it is the free gift of a generous people to a faithful public servant—the reward of patriotic effort in the service of freemen—*himself one of them*. Never unmindful of this generous confidence, so early bestowed, and so unremittingly maintained for a long course of years, Mr. Clay could not overlook them in his farewell speech to the Senate, the last of March, 1842. After having endeavored to express his obligations to the Senate, to the country, to *all* his friends "throughout this continent," he added:—"What shall I say—what *can* I say at all commensurate with those feelings of gratitude which I owe to the State, whose humble representative and servant I have been in this chamber?" [Here Mr. Clay's voice faltered under the struggle of his emotions.] "In the darkest hour of calumny and detraction, when I seemed to be forsaken by all the rest of the world, she threw her broad and impenetrable shield around me, and bearing me up aloft in her courageous arms, repelled the poisoned shafts that were aimed at my destruction, and vindicated my good name against every false and unfounded assault."

"*Bearing me up aloft in her courageous arms,*" said Mr. Clay, lifting and extending his own arms, and raising his voice, which trembled and broke with emotion, as he said it. We heard it. And he who heard it, will not soon forget the *manner*.—"Repelled," said Mr. Clay, with a corresponding expression of gesture, which told the triumphant vindication he experienced in that hour, from such defenders.

He met them again, face to face, in 1842, when the same scene was re-enacted, in the presence of tens of thousands, with additional interest, arising from the circumstances of the present, the history of the past, and the prospect of the future.

*Mr. Clay's re-election to the Senate in 1831.*

We are forced to go backward and forward, for the sake of putting like things under the same head, though far apart in time. Never were the services of Mr. Clay more required, in defence of American labor and enterprise, than on his return to the Senate in 1831, in which branch of Congress he had not had a seat since 1811. The faithlessness of the then existing Administration to the best interests of the country, and their insidious attempts to break down the tariff regulations of 1824 and 1828, were but too apparent. Mr. Clay was the only man equal to the crisis, and even he, as we have before noticed, was only able to save the tariff from immediate and entire demolition by a Compromise.

*Mr. Clay's second nomination to the Presidency.*

It was made by the National Republican Convention, at Baltimore, the 12th of December, 1831, and the Hon. John Sargeant was nominated for Vice President. Mr. John Floyd, of Virginia, and the Hon. Wm. Wirt were also in the field for 1832. But the action of those opposed to the Jackson dynasty, in this campaign, was rather to keep up the organization, than with any expectation of success. It was manifest that the people had not even begun to recover from the infatuation of the time, and from the poison that had been infused into their minds by the calumniators of Mr. Clay. Although Mr. Clay is ever a candidate for the Presidency in the *hearts* of his friends, he has never been put in nomination, and never been in the field, but *twice*, viz., in 1824, when he was cheated out of it, as we have shown, and for the campaign of 1832, when no one expected any other result than the success of General Jackson. In 1836 he declined a nomination, that was tendered.

*"I would rather be right, than be President."*

So said Mr. Clay to the Hon. Wm. C. Preston, in a private interview, as certified by the latter. If for many years, when truth and fairness could not prevail, such a resolution did him no good, it is nevertheless true, that, in the end, honesty is the best policy. Where, in the history of political society, has such *firmness in the right*, against such obstacles and such assailants, been maintained so long, so unswervingly, so heroically? Long time were the doctrines and policy advocated by Mr. Clay injurious to him politically; and he knew, and all knew, it would be so. But who ever saw him trim? Who ever accused him of a want of frankness?



*The public domain.*

We need not say how much the country owes to Mr. Clay for his course on this subject; though it may be proper to state, what is not generally thought of, that the public lands would have been for ever wrested from the rightful owners, but for him. It is also proper to notice the fact, that this question would have been finally and fairly settled in 1833, but for a fraud on the people, by subverting the operation of the Constitution. The bill passed by a majority of 24 to 20 in the Senate, and of 96 to 40 in the House. Such was the feeling in Congress on this subject, it was never doubted, that it would have passed by a vote of *two thirds* in both houses, and thus become a law, even under the veto, if it had been returned in season for action. To have had it thus returned, was undoubtedly the constitutional right of the legislative branch of the Government. But advantage was taken of the adjournment of Congress before the ten days after it was sent to the President had expired, and he kept it over to the next session, thus defeating the will of the nation.

Again, in 1836, a land distribution bill was carried through the Senate by Mr. Clay, in a vote of 25 to 20, and though approved of by a majority of the House, it was nevertheless defeated there by the influence of the Executive. In 1842 it was killed by a Veto of John Tyler. In all these ways, and for so long time, not only on this, but on sundry other momentarily important measures, has the will of the nation been thwarted by the One Man power. This great measure of Mr. Clay, by which he has stood so long and so constantly, has never failed to have with it a majority of the people.

So anxious was Mr. Clay that this bill should escape the veto power in 1833, and so self-sacrificing his spirit for what he conceived to be the good of the country, that in the fervor of his zeal in debate, he turned and said to his colleague, Mr. Grundy, the friend of the President, "Tell General Jackson, if he will sign this bill, I will pledge myself to retire from Congress, and never enter into public life again."

*The United States Bank.*

Although the fundamental and vital principle of democracy, the will of the people, as expressed by their representative organs, was violated by General Jackson's veto of the bank bill in 1832, nevertheless, as the act was authorized by the Constitution, it does not compare with the flagrant criminality of the removal of the deposits. The President himself, in a message to Congress, proposed to enlarge the powers of the Secretary of the Treasury, with a view to this object, thereby recognising the sound doctrine, that it could not otherwise be done, as the Constitution had made Congress the keeper and given that body the control of the public funds. The House of Representatives answered the message by a vote of 109 to 46 against the proposal, which was decisive so far as the authority of the Constitution could go. But, lo! General Jackson walks straight over this vote, and over the Constitution, and removes the deposits, in the face of both! It was impossible for Mr. Clay, as a public guardian of the Constitution and the rights of the people, to be silent on these occasions, so painful to the heart of the true patriot. Uniformly, therefore, and frequently has he stood up to denounce these abuses of the Veto power, and these infractions of the Constitution. The Resolutions of the Senate on the removal of the deposits, though "*Expunged*" by a subsequent resolution of the same body, are only made more conspicuous by the latter act, and will hand the true story down to posterity.

*Mr. Clay's Policy in regard to a national bank.*

All know that Mr. Clay is in favor of such an institution; but it is not without reference to the *will of the people*, that he would propose one. When the Sub-treasury was under debate, in 1836, he said in the Senate, "If a national bank should be established, its stability and utility will depend upon the general conviction that is felt for its necessity. *And until such a conviction is deeply impressed upon the people, and clearly manifested by them, it would, in my judgment, be unwise even to propose a bank.*" When Senator Wright, the same year, in answer to petitions for a bank, offered a resolution, "that the prayer of the petitioners ought not to be granted," Mr. Clay moved the following substitute, "That it will be expedient to establish a bank of the United States, whenever it shall be manifest, that a clear majority of the people of the United States desire such an institution," which was negatived, and Mr. Wright's was adopted. That is, it was resolved, that a clear majority should not rule! In 1842, Mr. Clay put forward, in a letter to Mr. Jacob Stratton, Secretary of the National Clay Club, at Philadelphia, a summary of principles of public policy, as held by him, the first of which is, "A sound national currency, regulated by the will and authority of the people."

*General Jackson's meditated war with France.*

The first instalment of the indemnity of 25,000,000 of francs, nearly \$5,000,000, as negotiated in the treaty of 1831, for French spoiliations on our commerce from 1800 to 1815, was not paid by reason of the refusal of the French Chambers to make an appropriation; but the King and his ministry desired to pay. As our Executive only had to do with the Executive

of France in this matter, there was no difference between them, and some courtesy was due to the King of the French in his inability. But General Jackson, in his message of December, 1834, recommended a law, authorizing *reprisals*, in case the French Chambers should not provide for the debt during the then approaching session. That this menacing attitude of the President of the United States should deeply wound the King of the French, and exasperate the French Chambers, and the nation, is not strange. Louis Philippe recalled his minister from Washington, tendered passports to our minister at Paris, and we were at once on the eve of war, when Mr. Clay brought in his celebrated "*French Report*," on the 6th of Jan. 1835, the result of which, in connexion with a corresponding resolution of the Senate, was the restoration of good feeling and the payment of the debt, while the honor of our country was maintained. This *third* time was the nation saved from the horrors and calamities of war by *Henry Clay*. So bent was General Jackson on a fight with France, that he stayed at the Capitol till 12 o'clock the last night of the Session, urging an appropriation that would put the business in his own hands.

#### *Mr. Clay in the Twenty-seventh Congress.*

What that Congress *did*, has been shown in our first tract, *THE TEST*; what they *could not do*, by reason of treachery, everybody knows already. The Chief that was set up by the people, had been stricken down by the hand of the Almighty, and in his place came one, second only, in the violations of trust, to him who sold his Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver.

But Mr. Clay, schooled in the misfortunes of his country, and never despairing of the republic, stood erect in the common disappointment, and witnessed the complete redemption of the country *deferred* again by an inscrutable Providence. Shoulder to shoulder with his political associates, himself leader, he fought through the Extra-Session for the principles and measures he had contended for through life, and though he had wished and purposed to retire from the councils of the nation at an earlier date, he yielded to the claims of duty, in this unexpected exigency of public affairs, to attend the next Session. Failing of the measures which the country waited for, and had a right to expect, Mr. Clay embraced this last opportunity to propose some amendments in the Constitution of the United States, and to bring forward his views, in the form of sundry resolutions offered to the Senate, as to the policy and measures required in the present state of the country. Each of these resolutions, *eleven* in number, was discussed at large by him the 1st of March, 1842. They regarded chiefly the revenue and financial policy of the Government, the disposal of the public domain, retrenchment and reform in the different branches of the public service, and proposed to require of the Heads of the Departments detailed reports on these several modes of reform, preparatory to legislative action.

The amendments of the Constitution proposed, were: 1. To restrict and limit the Veto power. 2. To secure to Congress the control of the Treasury, by vesting in that body the appointment of the Secretary. And 3. To prohibit the President from appointing members of Congress to office, during the term for which they are elected.

Having at the Extra Session given his aid for the repeal of the Sub-treasury, and labored in vain to re-establish a sound national currency system, and having finally at the Session of 1841-2, propounded a system of national policy in the resolutions above referred to, together with the aforesaid amendments of the Constitution, he bade farewell to the Senate on the 31st of March, and retired to private life.

#### *Mr. Clay's Speeches.*

In the speeches of Mr. Clay will be recognised the intellectual and moral stamp of this great American Statesman. There will be found, in his own peculiar diction, (wanting, indeed, the charm of his *manner*), his *American system*, with the facts and reasons, by which he so ably set it forth, and so triumphantly defended it; his general views of national policy, as well as his views of particular questions; and most of the things that have made him so eminent and surpassingly influential in human society. Hundreds of his speeches, and some of his most brilliant efforts, have been lost, for want of a hand to record them at the time of utterance.

[A cheap collection of his most important speeches, as they bear on the public interests of the country, well chosen, and well edited, from the most approved copies, in *two volumes*, with a memoir of his life prefixed, has been published by Greeley & McElrath, Tribune Office, New York, *price one dollar*, which, we are happy to observe, is in great demand from all parts of the Union, and going off by hundreds and thousands. It is an auspicious evidence of a growing appetite in the public mind for the food to be derived from such a source. It is, in fact, a library of the political history of our country, which every American citizen should have within his reach.]

#### *Mr. Clay an American.*

Although born in Virginia, and adopted by Kentucky, however proud of him they may be, he does not belong to them, be it known; but he is the property of the whole country, to which he has devoted the labors of his life. From the character of his mind, and the influence



of his position, it is morally impossible that he should be infected with sectional prejudice. His heart, his soul is *American*—all American—and he belongs to the Union. Can another individual be found among us so entirely the property of the American people?

*Duelling—games at cards.*

In early life, Mr. Clay was a plural number of times engaged in "affairs of honor," and twice came to an encounter, first with Mr. Humphry Marshall, of Kentucky, growing out of Mr. Clay's motion for the members of the Kentucky legislature to clothe themselves in domestic fabrics—not a bad cause, though a bad result; and next, with Mr. Randolph. But Mr. Clay is now an *anti-duellist*, if we understand him. "I owe it to the community to say," he publicly observed in later years, "that no man holds in deeper abhorrence than I do, that pernicious practice. Its true corrective will be found, when all shall unite, as all ought to unite, in its unqualified proscription."

In 1819, when invited to a game of "bragg," he replied, "Excuse me, gentlemen. I have not played a game of hazard for more than twelve years, and I take this opportunity to warn you all to avoid a practice destructive of a good name, and drawing after it evil consequences of incalculable magnitude."

*Mr. Clay's private fortune.*

Sometime previous to 1820, Mr. Clay suffered deeply by suretyship, and was obliged to be absent from Congress two or three years, to get his affairs righted in the practice of his profession. No man has sacrificed more to his country in a pecuniary point of view, than Mr. Clay. As no lawyer ever had better chances, he might have acquired one of the largest fortunes in the Union, if, instead of devoting his life to the public, he had spent it in his profession. Mr. Clay is frugal in his habits, though not parsimonious. "Here is a *hundred dollars*," said Mr. Clay to a young man, handing it over to him, when he came to consult him for the recovery of an estate that belonged to him by rightful inheritance. "Take this," said Mr. Clay, "and when you want more, call on me." This is a fair specimen of the man. Notwithstanding this liberality of disposition, Mr. Clay has saved a comfortable and unembarrassed estate.

*The person of Mr. Clay—his manners—eloquence.*

Mr. Clay is tall, and slenderly, but tightly built, light-haired, and blue-eyed. He is accused by phrenologists of eagle-eyed perception. They aver, that he observes all, and sees through all, and is apt to hit game, when he fires. Some one has also suggested, that his mother a long time ago gave him a "mellow—mellow horn" to wind. Certain it is, if it was not naturally musical, and of surprising compass, he has made it so by practice. It has thundered deep tones, piped shrill notes, and performed all manner of musical functions between these extremes. Though it may be a little worse for wear, it is good yet, and preferred to all others.

Mr. Clay has grace, dignity, and command—the first to charm, the second to beget respect, and the third to excite awe. Mix them all together, and they make a very perfect man.

As to his eloquence, it must have been matchless in his youth, judging from its effects. The courts, juries, and legislature of Kentucky, popular assemblies there and elsewhere, and both houses of Congress, have successively, for nearly half a century, been swayed by him.

*Mr. Clay the candidate of the people for the Presidency in 1844.*

We have never yet seen the Whig man that could make up his mouth to say otherwise. The simultaneous rush of the Whig press, of Whig conventions, of Whig assemblies, formal and informal, of nineteen twentieths, if not ninety-nine hundredths of the Whig party throughout the Union, to put forward the name of Henry Clay for 1844, after the faithlessness of the Acting President was placed beyond question, is a most extraordinary fact; and the constantly augmenting power of this general feeling, is another remarkable fact. The suggestion, that it was unseasonable, can not well be sustained. It was an extraordinary, unparalleled position of the public mind. All confidence in the unfortunate choice that had been made of the *second* on the ticket of 1840, who, by a melancholy event of Providence, succeeded as principal, was lost. The great and victorious party of 1840, was without a chief, and temporarily doomed to a most vexatious overthrow of their hopes. If they could not rally without delay, and concentrate their affections somewhere, they would be scattered to the winds. So far from being unseasonable, it was a *necessity*. It was the irresistible action of the instincts of self-preservation. And where else *should* they—*could* they go? Wait they *must*, but not to know what they might hope for in the end, was like the agony of final dissolution—like the winding-sheet of despair.

Most fortunately, fortunate beyond all example in such a case, there was a man not unknown to fame—a man whom they *would* and *should* have had before—a tried and faithful man—a man equal to any and all emergencies, as proved by almost every variety of public service for forty years—who never faltered or made a mistake in the great exigencies of the



nation—who filled the eye of the great world, and for whom the world cherished a profound regard—a man equally respected at home and abroad—and whose high endowments and rare gifts seemed to have been made and modelled for the occasion. Upon him, without pause, and with unexampled unanimity, they fixed their eyes and their hopes. A more settled, or more determined purpose has rarely, if ever characterized a state of the public mind. As well might you turn back the rivers, or roll back the tides of the ocean, as to oppose these accumulating forces.

### *Gratitude—Ingratitude.*

If there has been occasion for the saying, that “republics are ungrateful,” we do not yet consent that the libel describes the American people. It was gratitude that led the people of this country into one of the greatest mistakes they ever committed. General Jackson did us great, eminent, heroic service, as a soldier. Not to confess it, would indeed be ungrateful. And military achievements are always attractive, imposing, and captivating, with a susceptible and generous people. But the very qualities which made Andrew Jackson a great general, unfitted him to guide the helm of State. That strong and unbending will, which is the best qualification to lead an army, is the worst possible to preside over a true democracy, where the will of all is to be consulted; that despotic authority which is necessary in the field, is most unsuitable in the Chief Magistrate of a free people; and that impetuosity which bears down a foe, in the onset of battle, will carry away the pillars of a republic. Here is the secret of the misfortunes of our country in having chosen for President such a man as Andrew Jackson. But it was *gratitude* that made him President.

While General Jackson was the military idol of the nation, Mr. Clay was borne down by the calumnies already noticed—calumnies which, for a long period, poisoned the public mind, but which have since been driven and chiefly eradicated from the field they occupied. He now stands before the whole country a patriot as spotless as he is disinterested, having the advantage, not only of all his recognised merits, but of a man, who, emerging from a dark cloud of aspersion, justified by the certificate of his foes, and ennobled by the dignity of his bearing while suffering injustice, is received into the bosoms of a generous people with a thousand fold more enthusiasm, than would otherwise have been felt for him, with all his exalted gifts. “He is too good a man to be President,” was all that could be urged against his nomination at Harrisburg in 1839. We shall see whether such a libel on the American people will be proved, now they know what he is. Not till it is proved, will we consent to the charge of ingratitude on this republic towards such a man.

### *Mr. Clay's Magnanimity.*

None will deny, that Mr. Clay was the choice of the Whig party for the Presidential campaign of 1840, or that his public services had fairly entitled him to the nomination. But foreseeing that the Harrisburg Convention might be embarrassed in the selection of the candidate, for reasons which it is unnecessary here to notice, Mr. Clay had written to one of the Delegates in terms to discharge his friends from any such adherence to him, as might tend to disturb the harmony of that body, or mar general unanimity in supporting its decision. When that decision was finally announced, the reading of this letter, the existence of which was known to a few, was called for, from which we make the following extract:—“With a just and proper sense of the high honor of being voluntarily called to the office of President of the United States, by a great, free, and enlightened people, and profoundly grateful to those of my fellow-citizens who are desirous to see me placed in that exalted and responsible station, I must nevertheless say, in entire truth and sincerity, that, if the deliberations of the Convention shall lead them to the choice of another as the candidate of the Opposition, *far from feeling any discontent, the nomination shall have my best wishes, and receive my cordial support.*” Considering the just claims of the writer, as universally acknowledged, but which he would be the last to put forward, and what must necessarily have been his motive in this letter, none can fail to be deeply impressed with a sense of its magnanimity and patriotism. Such was the preponderance and force of the popular desire for the nomination of Mr. Clay, there is every reason to believe, that the summons to the onset of 1840 would have failed, if Mr. Clay had not so magnanimously stepped forward, at the head of his own legions, to fight the great battle in favor of the Nominee who had been selected.

### *A Contrast.*

In 1829, at the end of Mr. Adams' Administration, it could be said, that Congress *had* been independent, and the dominant power in the republic, as the immediate representatives of the people ever ought to be. Then, our commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, were in a most flourishing condition, never so much so; our currency system was sound, the best in the world; labor was sure of employment, and of a fair reward; there were few brokers, usurers, and money-lenders; work, and not speculation, was the business of the people; our habits were simple and democratic; and our national honor and commercial credit, without a stain. We were a prosperous, wealthy, thriving, happy people. Such was the state of the country when its government was conducted on the principles of Mr. Clay, and he a part of the Government.

But in 1829, democracy was superseded by ONE MAN POWER; Congress became a mere Executive tool; a train of devastation, social and commercial, moral and physical, such as no other country ever experienced in so short a time, from similar causes, followed; our manufactures were nearly prostrated; trade was paralyzed; agriculture was depressed; the currency was ruined; general morals were corrupted; our honor sullied and our credit gone; wild and ruinous speculations drove industry and economy from the field of enterprise; brokers and jobbers rode the nation out of breath and out of flesh; and the Government of the country, in all its branches and agencies, was put up at auction to the highest bidders, in a system of utter political venality and crime.

“Look on this picture—then on that.”



